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SUBJECT: SOUTHEAST TURKEY PRESS SUMMARY FOR DECEMBER 1, 2005

This is the Southeastern Turkey press summary for December 01, 2005. Please note that Turkish press reports often contain errors or exaggerations; AmConsulate Adana does not vouch for the accuracy of the reports summarized here.

POLITICAL, SECURITY, HUMAN RIGHTS

CUMHURIYET / HURRIYET: The statements of Jandarma Chief Sergeant Ali Kaya, Noncommissioned Officer Ozcan Ildeniz, PKK defector Veysel Ates, and the bookstore owner Seferi Yilmaz, about the Semdinli bombing are reportedly contradicting one another. According to Yilmaz, "He (Ates) ran away from the bookstore after throwing the bomb in there. I chased him and told people outside to catch him. In the meantime the bomb had already exploded. Outside, there were three more people along with him (Ates). People attempted to kill him. However, we surrendered [him] to the police. In the notebook (in which a plan of the bookstore was found), there were nearly 100 names written down and my name was struck through. (Note: Ali Kaya said in his statement that they had drawn the plan of the bombed bookstore on the day of the incident. End Note.) The list also included the names of the mayor and clan leaders who have affiliations with DEHAP (Democratic People's Party)." According to the statements given by Kaya and Ildeniz, "We parked our car in front of AKP premises when we came to Semdinli. I, Veysel, and Ozcan were in the car. We were to meet a person who would provide information in order to talk with him outside the district. Following our meeting, the informant would leave us and we would go to the Prosecutor's Office to submit the report there. Ozcan needed a break, and as he was leaving the car, a big explosion took place. As a security officer would normally do under such a circumstance, I rushed to the spot where the bombing took place. Veysel also got out of the car and was coming towards me as I walked 10 meters to see a group of people looking at Veysel and shouting 'This is a defector'. Everybody in Semdinli had already known Veysel. Suddenly people gathered in the place and started shouting 'Give us the defector'. I cried 'We are security officers; this car is an official state car.' People started hitting the car; they broke the back window and hit Veysel. All this lasted for 10 minutes." According to PKK defector Veysel Ates's first statement given at the Prosecutor's Office, Ates said "We set off at 8.30 a.m. to meet the people who would provide us with information. We arrived at Semdinli. Ozcan would observe ablution and we would buy a lottery ticket. Before we even got out of the car, we heard an explosion. People came towards us and started hitting at us. "

HURRIYET / CUMHURIYET: Officers Ali Kaya and Ozcan Ildeniz reportedly further said that they have obtained intelligence that two PKK members were stationed in Semdinli, a strategic hub point providing access both to Iran and Iraq where the district's two major clans had close relationships with Barzani's clan in northern Iraq, to enhance their organizational capabilities there and to recruit new members. Reportedly, the two PKK members were raising money by collecting a "tax" from people. That's why, said the officers in their statements, they (the officers) started following Seferi Yilmaz, whom allegedly had ties with this militia organization formed in Semdinli. The officers, while dismissing the claims that they had formed an organized crime network, further said that everything they had been doing was known by their commanding officers. Cumhuriyet daily claims that the statements of the officers revealed that they came to Semdinli on November 7 as well, and their second visit on November 9 was not a mere coincidence, a fact contradicting the officers' initial statements given.

HURRIYET: The daily reported that CHP (Republican People's Party) did not appoint Esat Canan, Hakkari deputy from CHP, to the Parliamentary Investigation Commission for the Semdinli Case. Esat Canan was in Semdinli during the incidents, his announcements kept the incidents on the agenda and his remarks were broadcasted on Roj TV. While CHP administration said, "There is no specific reason for not selecting him," Canan said that not selecting Canan as a commission member would be an inadequacy on his party's part.

HURRIYET / CUMHURIYET: According to Anavatan (Motherland Party) National Leader Erkan Mumcu, PM Erdogan's remarks saying, "I deem either the PKK flags flown or F-16 aircrafts flying low (over people during a funeral) as wrong actions" is wrongfully putting the PKK on equal footing with the security forces.

HURRIYET: RTUK (Higher Board for Radio and Television) decided to lift the stipulation that required a study and assessment of

the audience profile before giving a license to television companies broadcasting in local languages, including the Kurdish language. The regulation required will be arranged next week and Kurdish language broadcasting will be started two weeks later from today.

CUMHURIYET / SABAH / RADIKAL / OZGUR GUNDEM: A four-person Ministry of Health delegation went to Malatya to investigate the diarrhea epidemic case there (see press summary 11/29). Meanwhile, Malatya's Mayor claimed that the numbers of the patients having diarrhea in Malatya were exaggerated and the results of Inonu University's analysis of the case were politically manipulated. The mayor dismissed the claims that chlorination was applied insufficiently in the city stored water (see press summary 11/29). Cumhuriyet and Sabah dailies claimed that the analysis of the city water supply by the City Hygiene Administration revealed mixing of sewage water into the potable water.

OZGUR GUNDEM: Former DEHAP's (Democratic People's Party) Mardin Provincial Chairperson Cemal Veske claimed that JITEM members stopped his car the previous night at the entrance of Mardin's Kiziltepe district and attempted to kidnap him. Veske, who reportedly barely escaped from the JITEM members, filed a complaint with the Kiziltepe Prosecutor's Office concerning the alleged incident.

OZGUR GUNDEM: A Van Centennial University student was arrested on charges that he made PKK propaganda during a protest activity held (on an unspecified date) against the Semdinli case.

OZGUR GUNDEM: The daily reported claims about alleged oppression shepherds and guerillas' families were subjected to in two villages of Mardin's Savur district. Separately, security forces reportedly caught 4 alleged PKK members during a military operation in Mardin's Derik district. According to Mardin's Security Directorate, the PKK members were readying an attack against BOTAS's (Pertroleum Pipeline Corporation) oil pipeline in the Mazidagi district in Mardin.

OZGUR GUNDEM: The daily reported yesterday that a police station in a quarter of Tunceli moved from its position there before clearing mines they planted on the surrounding land. Tunceli CHP deputy announced that it will bring the case to the agenda of the Turkish Parliament, because the mined area, being very close to a Boarding Primary School, would pose grave risks for children and people.

RADIKAL: Ministry of Justice decided to initiate an investigation against Van Chief Prosecutor Kemal Kacan for breaching the secret nature of the investigation, which is carried out against Van Centennial University Rector Yucel Askin, through making a press announcement about the investigation. There are already two ongoing investigations initiated against Kacan. One of the investigations was opened because Kacan allegedly said once that half of the attorneys in Van were PKK affiliated.

SABAH: Hakan Acil, the police officer, who was kidnapped by terrorists on October 9 on the road to Sirnak's Cizre district, has not been released for 53 days. Reportedly, a pro-PKK website of Firat News Agency published statements of Hakan Acil, who reportedly said that he talked on the phone with his father a couple of minutes ago and that he was safe and sound. Acil allegedly further said that he would be released, and that the Human Rights Association would take him.

CUMHURIYET: The chief doctor of Van Centennial University said that the health condition of the University's Rector Yucel Askin was still serious. Reportedly, Askin, aside from his physical health problems, suffered from psychological problems and was not responding well to his psychological treatment.

OZGUR GUNDEM: Seventeen children in Sanliurfa's Viransehir district are now being treated with life support therapies allegedly because of a disease called Subacute Sclerosing Panencephalitis (SSPE). Reportedly, the children became ill after having measles vaccination in October 2003. Increase of SSPE cases has caused Viransehir Subgovernor to apply to many universities to call for studies on these cases.

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